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ABSTRACT

The 12 publications on program evaluation selected for annotation have previously been entered in the ERIC system. Six of the entries are manuals or handbooks on how to conduct a program evaluation. Official manuals from Oklahoma, Wisconsin, California, and the Los Angeles (California) Unified School District are included along with one on applied strategies and another on evaluating small programs. Techniques for conducting program evaluations described in the annotations include student interviews, criterion-referenced approaches, an outcome-based model, and a model from Australia. Two additional entries limit the level of their coverage to elementary education and secondary education respectively. Information for ordering copies of the items reviewed is supplied. (MLF)

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# THE BEST OF ERIC

## ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Number 68, February 1983

*The Best of ERIC* presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give educators easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative, rather than exhaustive, of literature meeting those criteria.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

# Program Evaluation

1 **Brandt, Ronald. S.,** Editor. *Applied Strategies for Curriculum Evaluation.* Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1981. 130 pages. ED 211 582.

A school's humanities program is probably the most difficult part of the instructional program to evaluate. In fact, states one of the contributing authors of this refreshing, and sometimes humorous, publication, "Evaluating a humanities program holds challenges akin to those involved in evaluating a formal religion"; humanities educators, with their "unbridled enthusiasm and lofty aspirations for their programs," are incredulous that anyone would even *attempt* to evaluate their high-minded programs.

But in this era of accountability and budget cuts, even humanities programs must justify their existence. This excellent publication shows how humanities program evaluations might be carried out. Editor Brandt asked eight experts in the field of educational evaluation how they would evaluate a specific humanities program—that at Radnor (Pennsylvania) Middle School. Their responses—compiled into seven chapters—provide a wealth of useful ideas and methods, most of which are applicable beyond humanities programs to all instructional programs.

For example, Deborah G. Bonnett—an experienced practitioner with wide experience in educational evaluation—outlines the eight-step process she would use to evaluate the program. William Webster, a full-time evaluator in the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District, describes the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model he would use. And Blaine Worthen—an award-winning pioneer of adversary evaluation—explains in detail his assessment of the humanities program in a chapter titled "Journal Entries of an Eclectic Evaluator." Included are two appendixes outlining the history of Radnor's humanities program and a report from the district's humanities curriculum review committee.

2 **California School Boards Association.** *How to Evaluate Your School Instructional Program. Curriculum Is a Board Member Responsibility.* Sacramento: CSBA, November 1981. 36 pages. ED 214 232.

New school board members are often enthused about improving their district's instructional program. Once they are seated at the board table, however, they begin to realize how complex and numerous curriculum issues are. A series of rationalizations for noninvolvement in program evaluation often follows, including the old familiar "Our problem is money—not curriculum."

But involvement in curriculum improvement is in fact a legal school board responsibility, as chapter 1 of this excellent publication shows. This involvement does not mean a "take-over" of superintendent responsibilities: "The ablest and most helpful school board members," the authors point out, "are those who become knowledgeable about and keenly interested in the curriculum, but who are willing to leave detailed and technical school management and all instructional matters to the superintendent and his or her staff."

The second chapter discusses how board members can become "comfortable" with curriculum involvement. First steps include reading, workshops, and classroom visits. Practical advice is given to make classroom visitation successful, including questions to ask before visiting schools, suggestions for preplanning a visitation, and questions to ask during a school visit.

Chapter 3 outlines the "tools" needed to evaluate programs. Discussed here are the philosophy, goals, and objectives of evaluation, a sample board policy on curriculum evaluation, a list of tools (test scores, observations, feedback, state frameworks) for evaluation, and the criteria used for program evaluation. A final chapter describes how four school boards undertook their evaluation responsibilities.

3 **California State Department of Education.** *Elementary Program Review Handbook.* Sacramento: CSDE, 1981. 206 pages. ED 212 080.

This handbook is designed to assist members of elementary program review teams in their evaluation efforts. In practice, the majority of program reviews in California are conducted by representatives of the State Department of Education and by consortia of school districts. Thus this handbook is geared for use by evaluators at this level. But it can also be used profitably by parents or staff who participate in internal or self-reviews.

The handbook is divided into three sections. The first defines a program review and describes the review process. Specific guidelines are described for preparing and conducting a program review, including such actions as reading the school plan, contacting the school, meeting other members of the review team, observing classrooms, reviewing records, conducting interviews with individual teachers and administrators, and conducting group interviews with the school staff and school-site committees.

The second section goes into greater detail on how to conduct a program review. Three specific areas of evaluation are addressed: the effect of instruction on students, the effect of support services on instruction, and the effect of the improvement process on both support and instruction. For each area, specific and plentiful advice

EA 015 197

is rendered on the criteria used to judge quality, the process of collecting information, and the preparation of suggestions for program improvement. The final section of this handbook includes instructions for preparing the report of program review findings and guidelines for sharing the findings with the school community.

4 **Farley, Joseph M.** "Student Interviews as an Evaluation Tool." *Educational Leadership*, 39, 3 (December 1981), pp. 184-186. EJ 256 403.

"For a direct, honest assessment of what's happening in the classrooms of your school," Farley suggests, "ask the kids." Students are "an indisputable source of expertise" on all facets of the instructional program. Moreover, they can be "brutally honest." Tapping this rich source of evaluative data, though, takes some common-sense human communication skills, which Farley here explains.

Students should be randomly selected, or should be selected to represent all major subgroups of the student population. Interviewers should explain to students, clearly and directly, why they are asking questions or taking notes. "Successful interviewers," says Farley, "explain that they are evaluating a school or program in the hope of identifying strengths as well as opportunities and are not judging individual teachers."

Elementary students require action-oriented questions such as "What are you doing? Who told you to do it? What happens if you do it wrong?" and so forth. Secondary students can provide information at more abstract levels and can discuss "their individual experiences, opinions, and feelings regarding school."

The California State Department of Education has already developed a student-centered evaluative process that uses student interviews in combination with other information to assess school programs. Student interviewers in California are advised to use single ideas when questioning students and to use "neutral questions" that don't lead students to the expected answer. "Students are skilled in determining expected responses," Farley reminds us. "Interviewers should not reflect biases or the right answer in their questioning."

5 **Haladyna, Tom.** "Two Approaches to Criterion-Referenced Program Assessment." *Educational Leadership*, 39, 6 (March 1982), pp. 467-470. EJ 259 538.

Many school districts rely on standardized tests to provide data for program evaluation. But these tests, says Haladyna, "frequently are not directly relevant to local goals and objectives." A better method of obtaining high quality diagnostic data is to use one of the two criterion-referenced approaches to program evaluation described here: the "random sampling" plan or the "item response theory."

Both approaches require three initial steps. First, a specific set of curriculum objectives must be defined. If, for example, the program of interest is a reading program for grades 1-6, "the objectives should describe each and every major behavior students must acquire to become satisfactory readers by the district's standards."

Second, the district must identify or create test items geared to each objective. Haladyna suggests the items be collected from such sources as the Northwest Evaluation Association, a consortium of school districts that has developed a test item "bank." The items in this bank are keyed to instructional objectives and have already been field tested. If a district is using items from other sources, they should go on to step three—the item review and validation process.

In the random sampling plan, the district establishes a pool of twenty to fifty validated test items for each instructional objective. If, for example, the district has forty objectives and wants to create five different test forms, they randomly select five test items from each objective's pool and use them to create five different forty item tests. The test forms are then randomly distributed to all students in the fall and spring. Because sampling was random, Haladyna contends, the district gains unbiased data about each instructional objective.

Item response theory is essentially similar to the random sampling plan, except that items are selected based on their difficulty for individual students, and a more sophisticated statistical analysis of the results is used. Either approach, Haladyna concludes, "will help districts focus more specifically on instructional problems and their resolution, thereby making the testing program a major contributor to improved instruction."

6 **Iwanicki, Edward F.** "Developing a Secondary School Evaluation Program." *NASSP Bulletin*, 60, 401 (September 1976), pp. 71-76. EJ 153 057.

"Evaluation, if poorly conceived," says Iwanicki, "can be detrimental to the effective functioning of the secondary school." By using the practical, clearly stated advice offered here by Iwanicki, though, evaluation can be what it's supposed to be—an integral part of the school's instructional improvement effort.

An essential prerequisite for the development of an effective evaluation program is a clear statement of goals and objectives for the school. Iwanicki suggests that this statement be "pyramidal" in structure: at the top should be general school goals, followed by curriculum objectives related to each school goal, followed by specific instructional objectives related to each curriculum objective. Several resources, which Iwanicki briefly describes, are available to help schools identify their goals and objectives.

In the second step of program evaluation, the principal must decide what level of the pyramid an evaluation should focus on and what types of information need to be collected at each level. Then appropriate evaluation instruments must be selected according to their accuracy in measuring the objectives of the program being evaluated and according to "the convenience with which the results provided by the instrument can be used to make decisions" about the program under consideration.

Effective program evaluation involves more than stating goals and objectives, determining types of feedback, and selecting evaluation instruments, Iwanicki concludes. It also involves "the integration of these somewhat technical activities into the human organization of the school." Iwanicki closes with a few suggestions for facilitating this integration process.

7 **Landon, Glenda L., and Shirer, William.** *Program Evaluation Handbook*. Madison: Wisconsin School Evaluation Consortium, 1981. 62 pages. ED 211 576.

Do present scheduling practices in your school or district assist in the process of meeting instructional objectives? Are the levels of the materials in your reading program appropriate for the grades and courses in which they are used? What evidence exists to support your judgment in these areas?

These are the kinds of questions this manual poses for members of program evaluation committees to help them rationally think through complex program evaluation issues. Landon and Shirer have designed this manual for the final stage of an organized evaluation process. They assume that the data and other evidence needed for instructional program evaluation have already been collected. The central purpose of this manual, then, is to facilitate the final decision making process of program evaluation.

In the first section of this manual, the authors pose questions on program intent, including questions on learner expectations and on the district's "mission" statement. For example, they ask whether the sequence of expectations provides for appropriate reinforcement of skills and attitudes, and whether the program is addressing specific portions of the district's philosophy or mission.

A second section includes numerous questions on program delivery, in particular on such subjects as instructional materials, cur-

riculum leadership and administration, instructional strategies, and support program articulation. A final section covers program outcomes and includes thought-provoking questions on performance criteria, grades, test results, and student and staff attitudes.

8 **Lindley, Melinda, and Carter, Kathy.** "An Outcome-Based Model for School Evaluation and Program Development." Paper presented at the 66th Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, March 19-23, 1982. 62 pages. ED 218 315.

The Learner-Based Accountability System (LBAS) is a recently developed model for school evaluation and program development that is now in use in 174 Texas school districts. In this paper, Lindley and Carter describe the eleven components of the LBAS and explain how they work to translate program test data into practical classroom applications.

Components one through three are preparatory to the operational implementation of the LBAS. Component one is the all-important process of developing desirable learner outcomes which serve as the district's or program's goals. The authors devote considerable attention to this topic and outline a five-step process of developing, analyzing, and customizing program goals. Components two and three involve developing objectives-referenced tests and working out the logistics of test administration.

Components four through six include the actual administration of the tests and their scoring and reporting with the aid of specially designed computer programs. Lindley and Carter discuss eight special activities involved in the evaluating phase of the LBAS (components two through six), such as matching test items to local objectives, validating test items, and providing orientation for test administrators.

Components seven through eleven deal with the utilization of the evaluation data. The performance of individual students can be displayed and appropriate remedial action taken, or the overall scores for particular objectives can be presented for classrooms, schools, or the entire district. The latter means of analysis helps isolate the institutional or curriculum factors associated with learner needs.

9 **Los Angeles Unified School District.** *Program Related Evaluation (Manual and Staff Development Package).* Los Angeles: Research and Evaluation Branch, LAUSD, July 1980. 86 pages. ED 210 282.

Effective program evaluation requires that the evaluators—whether principals, central office personnel, or other school-site personnel—be well versed in the methodologies and instruments available for program evaluation. This publication is specifically designed for use in a training session for these administrators and contains all the materials necessary for such a session. It addresses three key areas of program evaluation: the actual assessment and reporting of local schools' instructional programs, the state requirements regarding ongoing evaluation, and the functioning of evaluation committees.

The first section contains a potpourri of evaluation forms, along with directions for their use and related materials. Included are a "Class Progress Form," a "School Progress Summary Form," a "Management Review Record of Program Outcomes," and an "Evaluation Committee Time Task Calendar."

The second section is a detailed speaker's script for an evaluation training workshop. In the script, the evaluation forms in the first section are more fully explained. Also discussed in the script are the purposes of evaluation, the importance of followup, and actual evaluation techniques.

A third section contains a set of transparency masters for use during the training session.

10 **Oklahoma State Department of Education.** *Curriculum Review Handbook: Language Arts, 1981-1982.* Oklahoma City: Curriculum Division, OSDE, 1981. 33 pages. ED 208 540.

This curriculum review handbook is designed to provide educators with a general system for evaluating their language arts programs from kindergarten through twelfth grade. It contains numerous questions, evaluation forms, checklists, and other tools useful for characterizing and evaluating such programs.

Prior to conducting the actual evaluation of the school's program, the evaluator should review the philosophy and rationale of the language arts program, the school's expectations regarding student achievement, and the school's existing educational program. Three separate questionnaires pose questions in these areas to help evaluators clarify the goals of evaluation and collect data needed in the evaluative process.

The largest part of this handbook is an extensive rating scale of various features of the language arts program. Items to be rated deal with philosophy, curriculum development, facilities and materials, teacher involvement, and student involvement. Specific levels of the program addressed are kindergarten, lower elementary, upper elementary, middle school, and senior high.

For example, three items under curriculum development ask whether a current language arts curriculum guide is available, whether a well-organized inservice program for improving language arts instruction exists, and whether the school has a stated language arts sequence of skills. The evaluator rates each item on a scale of four (strongly agree) to zero (strongly disagree), summarizes the scores for each area, and identifies areas of strength and areas needing attention. This handbook is one in a series (ED 208 536—ED 208 542) published by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Curriculum areas covered in the other handbooks include social studies, health education, business education, reading, early childhood education, and physical education.

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## 11

**Sungaila, Helen.** "A New Model for Program Evaluation: The 'Appreciative' One." *The Australian Administrator*, 1, 6 (December 1980), 6 pages. ED 213 137.

Most models of program evaluation attempt to determine the degree to which programs are meeting predefined objectives or criteria. These models use a variety of instruments and observation techniques to gain objective knowledge about programs. All these models, Sungaila states, "are founded in the logical-empirical research tradition" that developed in the nineteenth century; they are designed to allow the evaluator "to conduct and evaluate the educational affairs for which he or she is responsible in a rational fashion."

This all sounds quite reasonable, of course, but Sungaila believes that the "logical-empirical philosophy" of evaluation is "outdated." In this article, which is steeped in the jargon of the human potential movement, she proposes an alternative—an experience-based model of program evaluation designed to develop "an *existential understanding* of the program, as experienced by the participants."

In the first step of this "appreciative" model of evaluation, the evaluator makes a videotape of the program in progress, with particular attention paid to capturing "moments" of "life in the program." Then the evaluator views the tape with the participants and interviews them at length about how they felt at these influential moments. Questions might include: "Did you feel there was anything getting in the way of the development of the program?" and "At that 'moment' what was your understanding of where the program was going?"

Using this model, Sungaila concludes, "the evaluator does not 'code' the program reality in terms of any predetermined classificatory scheme. Rather, he allows the program participants to 'decode' for him what the living reality of the program was for them." Administrators who still cling to the "outdated" rational-empirical tradition may find Sungaila's ideas hard to swallow, but there is at least some food for thought in her radical human potential approach.

## 12

**Way, Joyce W.** *A Manual for Small Program Evaluation*. Cortland, New York: Institute for Experimentation in Teacher Education, New York State University, February 1981. 46 pages. ED 204 377.

Small programs, as defined by this manual, are those that affect 100 or less students, are taught by five or less instructors, and have no or limited special funding. For example, says Way, a small program might include a number of classrooms in the same language arts program, a team of teachers using the same methods, or, at its simplest level, one teacher teaching a group of students in a particular area or in a particular way.

This manual is specifically designed for the evaluation of such small programs. It assumes that the potential evaluators want to improve their programs, yet have no training in evaluation techniques and only a small amount of money for evaluation expenses.

The first "task" in evaluating a program is to decide what to evaluate. Some possible approaches to evaluation include comparing the program to alternatives, determining cost-effectiveness, and assessing the social and political effects of the program. These approaches, says Way, are difficult for a small program evaluator to implement. A more manageable approach is to determine whether the program has achieved its goals.

This brings us to the second task of evaluation—defining goals and objectives. Using extensive examples from one small program, Way illustrates how a realistic set of goals and objectives can be established. Next, an evaluation technique must be determined for each objective. Way suggests that commercial instruments and standardized tests be used wherever appropriate. If satisfactory instruments are not available, evaluators should embark on task four—developing needed instruments. To help in this task, Way gives extensive instructions on developing tests of various sorts.

After reviewing the overall evaluation design (task five), the evaluator should use the chosen instruments to collect the data (task six). Again, Way gives plenty of practical advice and illustrations to help inexperienced program evaluators. The final three tasks Way discusses are summarizing the results, writing the evaluation report, and, finally, making decisions about the program based on the evaluation results.

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Prior to publication, this manuscript was submitted to the National Association of Secondary School Principals for critical review and determination of professional competence. The publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

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